V. PHASE II EVALUATION STUDY

An archaeological evaluation study was initiated in January of 1992. Construction work related to foundation stabilization had been initiated some days earlier. Construction on the site was halted on January 26 because archaeological monitoring and excavation was required. During the months of January and February, monitoring occurred around the perimeter of the historic church, where trenches were being excavated to stabilize the foundation. The foundation was drawn to scale and photographed. In addition, a 3 foot x 6 foot trench (Trench 1) was excavated adjacent to the west wall of the historic church and 50 linear feet of additional trenches were excavated in the yard area to the west of the historic church. In the area to the north of the historic church and to the east of the modern church, construction monitoring was conducted during the months of July, August and September of 1992. Results of this monitoring and these excavations are presented below.

A. Methodology

1. Field Methodology

a. Construction Monitoring

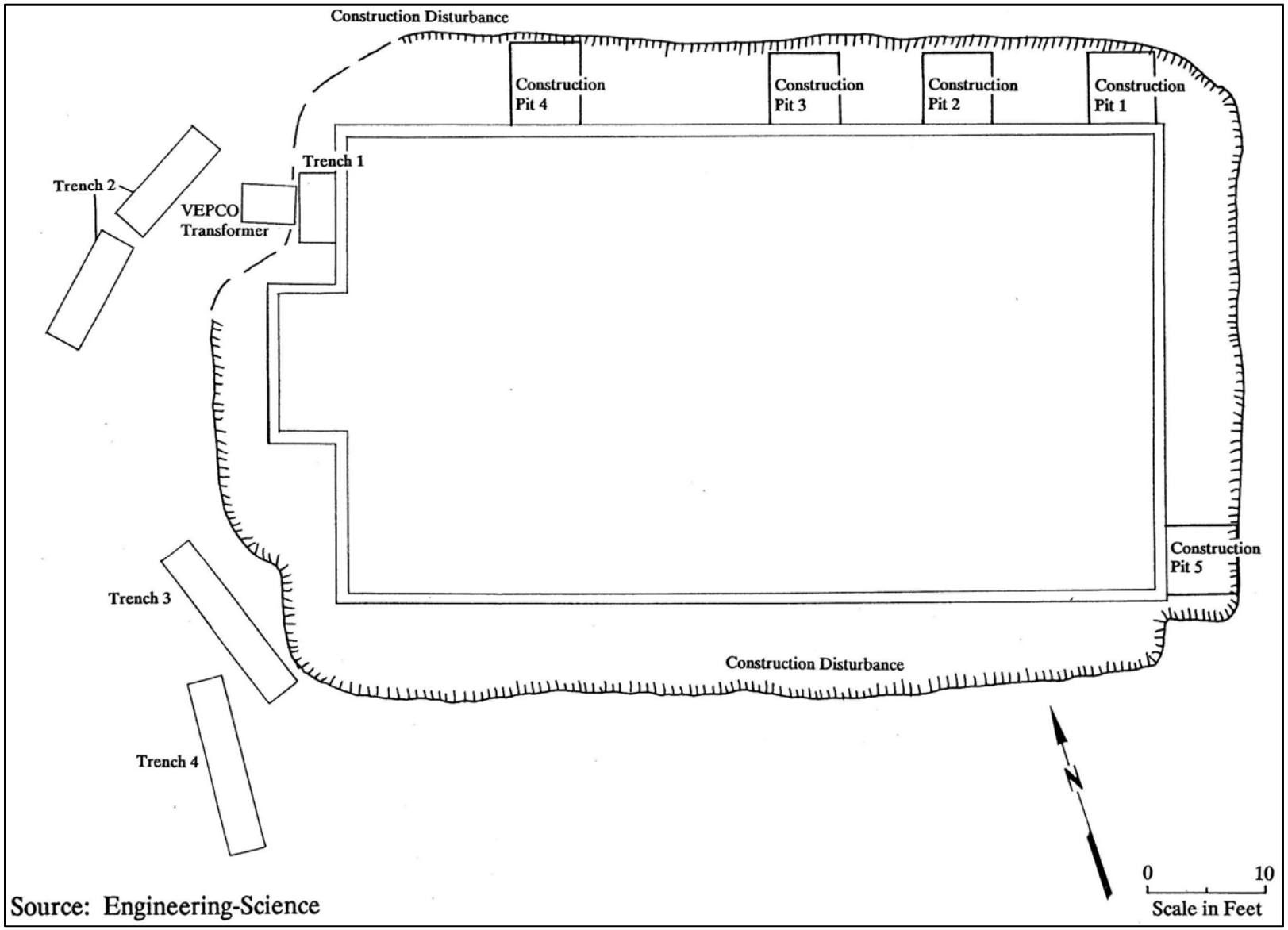
1. Perimeter of Historic Church

Construction monitoring was to occur for all foundation stabilization excavations around the historic church. However, excavation of the trench for foundation stabilization on the south side and in certain areas to the west of the building already had occurred prior to the arrival of archaeologists on the site. Some grading also had been done along the north wall of the historic church. As a result, monitoring only was conducted around the foundations on the north, east and west walls (Figure 28).

In locations where stabilization trenches had been excavated prior to the arrival of an archaeologist on the site, foundation walls were documented. Foundation walls were cleaned, described, drawn to scale and photographed.

Where construction monitoring was conducted, the backhoe was monitored at all times by an archaeologist. When any potential features or soil anomalies were encountered, the archaeologist had the opportunity to examine and record the features. Foundation walls of the historic church encountered during the monitoring task were cleaned, described, photographed and drawn to scale.

Foundations on the interior and exterior of the historic church were examined by an architectural historian, two architects and numerous archaeologists. Their observations were recorded and are being presented in the interpretation of the church structure.



Alfred Street Baptist Church

Figure 28. Location of Construction Disturbances, Stabilization Pits, and Archaeological Trenches

2. Area to the North of the Historic Church and to the East of the Modern Church

In addition to the construction monitoring for wall stabilization, construction monitoring was conducted in the area to the north of the historic church and to the east of the modern church. Stratigraphic deposits and any features encountered were recorded.

A well, which was discovered during construction monitoring in the alley to the north of the historic church, was recorded and excavated. A backhoe trench was excavated adjacent to the well. The side wall construction of the well was drawn and photographed. Bricks from the well then were removed and the well was bisected and excavated in section. The section was drawn in profile. The well was excavated to the extent of construction impact. The bottom of the well was not reached. All deposits discovered in the well represent secondary (fill) deposits. Because excavation did not reveal the presence of primary deposits, it was decided, in consultation with Alexandria Archaeology, not to excavate the other half of the well.

b. Trench Excavation

Four trenches were excavated in the yard area to the west of the historic church. The original recommendation for this area had been to excavate a series of excavation units. Since construction related activity was being conducted concurrently with archaeological excavation, however, it was necessary to modify the proposed archaeological methodology. This was done in consultation with Alexandria Archaeology.

The purpose of the trenching in this area was (1) to further examine the intact historic stratum (Universal Stratum C) discovered during the archaeological assessment, and, (2) to examine the remaining intact area to the west of the church where a builder's trench was anticipated to be present. Upon the completion of the archaeological study in this location, a utility trench was to be excavated in this area and additional disturbance was anticipated related to other construction activities.

The revised methodology proposed for this area had been (1) to excavate a single fifty foot diagonal trench running northeast to southwest in hopes of intercepting the archaeological features and deposits anticipated to be present and (2) to excavate a test unit adjacent to the west wall of the historic church to further examine the builder's trench.

Because of the presence of existing utilities and the need to work concurrently with ongoing construction, it was necessary to further modify the proposed archaeological methodology. Five trenches were excavated.

Trench 1 was a 3 x 6 foot unit adjacent to the west wall of the historic church. Its purpose was to intercept the builder's trench of the historic church and to determine the presence or absence of any builder's trench related to the rear addition (identified in the National Register Nomination as the organ chamber and reinterpreted as part of the Phase II evaluation as the chancel).

Trench 2 was to measure 50 feet in length. Miss Utility had identified the presence of a live electric line to the east of the proposed trench location. During the excavation of the first ten foot section of the trench (Trench 2A), however, a major utility trench was encountered. The presence of the utility disturbance necessitated the reorientation of the trench. Upon completion of the second ten foot section of Trench 2 (Trench 2B), it was obvious that it would be necessary to excavate the remaining 30 feet of the trench in separate sections. It would have been logistically impossible for the backhoe to maneuver if a single linear trench had been continued to be excavated. Two fifteen foot trenches, Trenches 3 and 4 were positioned to best cover the remaining yard area. The location of all trenches is illustrated in Figure 28.

The trenches were excavated according to natural strata. A bobcat was used to remove the overburden resulting from construction excavation which overlaid what had been the 1991 ground surface. Upon reaching that surface, excavation proceeded using shovels and trowels. All soil excavated was screened through 1/4" mesh hardware cloth. All trenches were excavated to natural subsoil. When considerable amounts of window glass, asbestos tile or bottle glass were encountered in those strata determined to be 20th-century overburden, these artifacts were sampled. Brick rubble and oyster shell were sampled. All artifacts recovered were placed in polyethylene bags with complete provenience information recorded in indelible ink and a bag inventory was prepared. The location of all trenches was recorded on a site map. All trenches were drawn and photographed in profile. Any features discovered were drawn and photographed in plan view and profile.

2. Laboratory Methodology

As with the Phase I identification study, artifacts were returned to the Engineering-Science laboratory to be washed, bagged, catalogued and stored. Stable historic artifacts were washed and brushed. However, unless soils were very wet and muddy, metal artifacts were dry brushed only. All metal was bagged separately. Selected metal artifacts were bagged with silica gel and blue indicator crystals to maintain a dry environment. Organic artifacts that came from a dry environment were dry brushed only, otherwise they were lightly washed. All materials were stored in polyethylene resealable bags into which small holes were punched to allow air to circulate.

Artifacts from strata designated to be the buried A horizon, Universal Stratum C and all features were catalogued and entered into a system using DBase 3-Plus. Artifacts from fill levels and 20th-century contexts were cleaned and examined, but were not entered into the database.

Bags were placed in archival boxes in bag number order. The site name and bag number were written on the outside of each bag in indelible ink. An acid-free tag containing site, provenience and bag number information was placed inside each bag. An acid-free, self adhesive label was placed on each box, stating site, phase of study, bag numbers and the number of the specific box within the series. At the completion of the project, all artifacts and field notes were sent to Alexandria Archaeology, Alexandria, Virginia.